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WHEN A WOMAN BUYS HOSIERY

An interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, broadcast Thursday, May 4, 1939, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home program, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 104 associate radio stations.

MAY 26 1939 ☆
U. S. Department of Agriculture

WALLACE KADDERLY:

And right on the dot here, on the first bright Thursday in the merry month of May, is Ruth Van Deman---bringing us news of what the Bureau of Home Economics is doing---news of particular interest to homemakers and women.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

Homemakers and women ---- I'm interested, Wallace, in the way you put that.

KADDERLY:

I wasn't intending to draw any fine distinctions.

VAN DEMAN:

Oh, I think it's a good thing now and then to recognize that others beside women have a hand in the homemaking. And that not all women are what you might call homemakers.

But here's something that I believe will interest practically every woman.

KADDERLY:

O-ho, so this is your new hosiery booklet. I've been hearing about this. But I hadn't seen a copy.

VAN DEMAN:

It's just off the press. Smell the printer's ink.

KADDERLY:

I'm looking at the pictures. Clear, beautiful pictures, and lots of them. This is a fine job.

VAN DEMAN:

Margaret Smith of our Textiles and Clothing Division ought to be here to take a bow. And Analouise Turner, the artist who planned the way the pictures are placed on every page.

KADDERLY:

But, Ruth, I don't see a thing here about men's socks.

VAN DEMAN:

No, we couldn't cover men's socks---not this time. This is just "Hosiery for Women--A Buying Guide". There on the first page are the ten points to look for ---

KADDERLY:

"Ten points in hosiery selection". Fiber comes first I see. Cotton---rayon ---silk---wool.

(over)

VAN DEMAN:

Or a mixture---whatever meets a person's need and is most suitable for the type of wear the hose are likely to get. I'm afraid a lot of us aren't very rational about that. We take some of these beautiful sheer gossamer stockings and expect them to do heavy duty.

The texture of a stocking has a lot to do with its wearing quality too---whether the yarns are tightly twisted and knitted closely together. A high twist makes them more resistant to snags.

The so-called crepe hose have that high twist and a permanent dull finish. In a way, all we could do in this booklet is to give pictures and notes to help a person understand what some of these terms about hosiery mean. At the very beginning there, Wallace, you'll find a diagram locating all the parts of a full-fashioned stocking.

KADDERLY:

What does that mean---full-fashioned?

VAN DEMAN:

It means that the stocking's knitted flat and then sewed up the back in a seam.

KADDERLY:

It is not knitted round and round?

VAN DEMAN:

Not if it's full-fashioned. It's knitted flat and stitches are dropped at various places in the leg and the foot to give it shape, so it will follow the contours of a human foot and leg.

KADDERLY:

I see. Then what is a stocking when it's not full-fashioned?

VAN DEMAN:

Circular knit. That is knitted round and round---the way a woman knits a sock by hand on four needles. She drops stitches every so often---

KADDERLY:

So I've noticed.

VAN DEMAN:

But, sometimes she drops them on purpose---"knit two together, drop one". That's the way she gives shape to the stocking. But in circular knit hose it's never possible to give the permanent refinements of shape that the full-fashioned have. That means of course when you're buying hosiery, it's a good idea to know where the full-fashioned marks are located, and how to tell the genuine from the imitation.

Then there's the question of proper reinforcements where the hardest wear comes ---

KADDERLY:

At heels and toes, I suppose.

VAN DEMAN:

You're right---heels and toes---sole of the foot---and top, or welt as it's called in the hosiery trade.

At the heel the reinforcement needs to come well up in the back---into a high splice. Even with that protection lots of us wear out our stockings first at the heel where the shoe rubs.

Sometimes it's a shoe that's too loose or has a rough lining that's really to blame.

Shadow reinforcements are a great help in sheer hosiery. They double the reinforcement in spots like the heel and toe, and the welt, where garter tension is so likely to start runs.

The run-stop row of stitches where the welt joins the leg of the stocking, is a safety feature that's coming more and more into use. In fact, when I buy stockings without a run-stop I feel I'm doing so at my own risk.

KADDERLY:

Ruth, I know some of our listeners are waiting to hear the latest news about the cotton stockings---the ones Miss O'Brien talked about one day.

VAN DEMAN:

Well, the textile people are pushing right along with their laboratory tests. They want to be sure of the wearing quality of their designs before they turn them over to manufacturers. We still have hopes that some of them will get into stores this summer.

And with the tremendous interest there is now in cotton for everything from evening gowns to rain capes, I believe more and more cotton hosiery is bound to get on the market.

It takes a while for some of these research suggestions to be worked out into commercial production.

Leaving the hosiery for just a moment I'd like to report what's happened this week on the new plan for sizing children's clothes.

KADDERLY:

Good, I'd like to know myself.

VAN DEMAN:

Monday of this week a small committee representing the clothing and pattern manufacturers and retailers came down here to Washington, as a follow-up of the conference at the American Standards Association in New York last week. They studied the figures we'd taken on 150,000 boys and girls. And they voted to recommend the two-way plan of sizing children's clothes, by hip measure and height.

KADDERLY:

By hip measure and height --- that's interesting. Now what happens---what's the next step?

VAN DEMAN:

This committee reports back to the larger group. There'll have to be more meetings and more votes. But after all, for such an important matter, this is working pretty fast. Miss O'Brien and I are very grateful to all of our listeners who've written telling us they're behind this plan to do away with age marks on children's clothes and make them to fit the height and the breadth of a youngster. Those letters are a good indication of what mothers want.

But Wallace, that is a little off-side from women's hosiery - - -

KADDERLY:

But that's spot news. We're glad to have this news about children's clothes of tomorrow.

And there's one very important question I want to get clear about this hosiery "picture book". Is this one on the free list?

VAN DEMAN:

No, I'm sorry, that's going to cost 10 cents a copy.

KADDERLY:

A whole dime.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, a whole dime. So if you want to take a copy home to Mrs. Kadderly, or send a copy to the library of the little red schoolhouse where you got your start, you're going to have to pay 10 cents for it---

KADDERLY:

I think I can stand that. Well, Farm and Home friends --- (repeat notice of Hosiery Booklet) --- "Hosiery for Women --- A Buying Guide)